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REVIEWS OF RECENT BOOKS

Sadakichi Hartmann's "A History of American Art," recently published by L. C. Page & Co., is a sad disappointment. One was led to expect a dignified, just, comprehensive work, on whose statements reliance could be placed, and one finds instead a book apparently hastily thrown together, with a paucity of authentic data, and at times a deplorable amount of worthless personal opinion and unjust if not cruel personal prejudices.

In a word, the work is a daintily gotten up gift book masquerading as a history. One regrets this, since a comprehensive and well-balanced history of American art is greatly needed. Bryan's "Dictionary of Painters and Engravers" and Muther's "Modern Painting," however well they may have answered the purpose of the student in their time, are now out of date.

Mr. Hartmann does not seem to have comprehended the needs of the public or his own opportunities. The best portions of his work are those that have been history for years, and of which Mr. Hartmann's account may be taken as a rehash. The author errs most grievously when he essays dogmatically to express his own opinion or gives expression to prejudices that reflect upon him as an historian. His attack on the sculptor St. Gaudens, for instance, is little less than malicious.

The sincerity of St. Gaudens's purpose and the excellence of his work have never been questioned by competent critics. Yet Mr. Hartmann charges that he was "often cruel to others, even against his will"; that "many a young talent was crushed by his resistless onward march to fame"; that "he rose, as every man of genius does in the battle of life, leaving behind him a field of corpses." He further alleges that St. Gaudens "succeeded in forming a sort of Tammany ring in American sculpture. He made himself the Croker and controlled his profession for years with despotic power." This is not history, it is simply vilification, and unworthy of the author.

The first volume of the work, that on painting, gives a fair estimate of the old-time painters, such as West and Stuart, but the author shows a singular lack of familiarity with present-day painters of repute and promise. His acquaintance seems to be limited to merely a few Eastern men, whom he chooses to notice or eulogize. Other men of equal merit are not accorded so much as a mention. Of American artists resident in Europe, for instance, he only mentions Whistler and Sargent, and his attention is about as sparingly given to American artists resident in this country. Of engravers and engraving he makes

no mention whatever, though this form of art has had admirable American exponents.

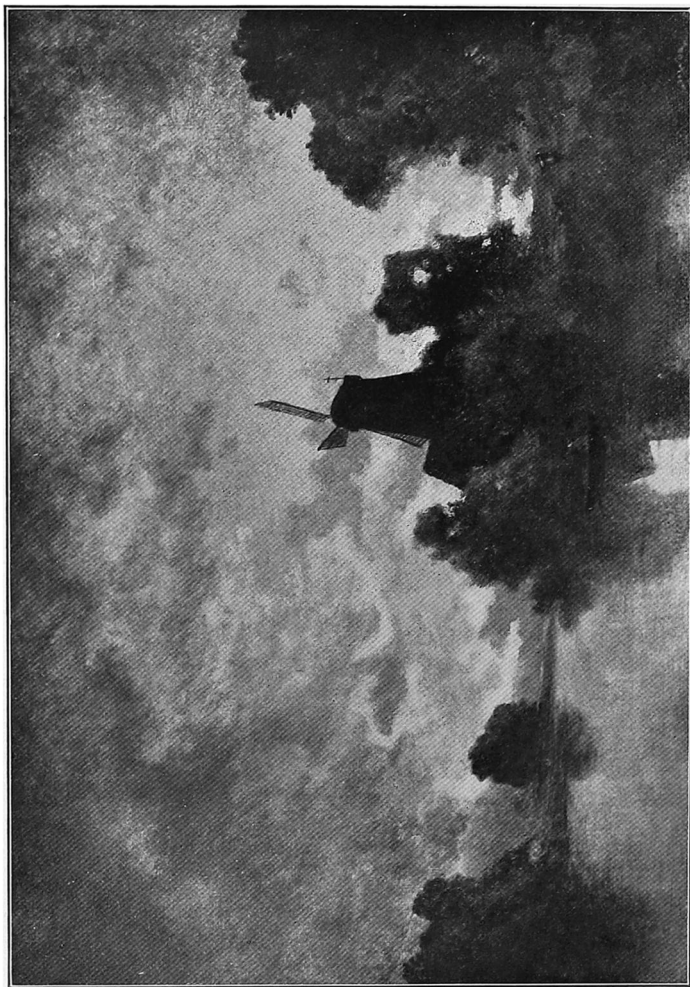
If Mr. Hartmann were simply writing a magazine article it would be permissible in him to omit reference to as many artists as he pleased; in what purports to be history such a practice is inexcusable. His implied slur, moreover, on women artists is neither gracious nor just. Another weakness of the work is the *ex cathedra* way in which the author assigns ranks and uses superlatives. Mr. Chase is the "only" one of a long list of native artists whose career shows improvement. T. W. Deming is the "ideal portrayer" of American womanhood. F. P. Vinton is "our best" portrait-painter. "The foremost," "the best," "the most intellectual," "the most modern," and similar phrases are scattered through the pages with more profusion than discrimination.

One notes also a reckless disregard of correctness in the matter of proper names. For instance, Richard Caton Woodville appears as Richard Carton Woodville; Julia Bracken, as Clio Bracken; Steinlen, as Steinlan; and W. L. Dodge, as George Dodge. One deplores the shortcomings of the work the more since one must admit that the book is crisply and entertainingly written. Probably if Mr. Hartmann had spent more time on his task, and had been more ambitious to supply facts than to air his individual views, the book might have merited the name of history.

Little need be said at this time in praise of "French Art," by W. C. Brownell, lately issued in a superb new edition by Charles Scribner's Sons. The work has been before the public since 1892, and the value of Mr. Brownell's careful analysis and critical judgment of French art has been freely admitted by all who have made a study of the subject. The author was peculiarly fitted by education and predilection for the task he undertook of presenting French art in a dispassionate and yet sympathetic way to English readers, and his monographs on classic, romantic, and realistic painting and on classic and academic sculpture are as careful a presentation of these forms of French art as the most exacting student could demand.

The fact that a new edition of the work has been demanded after nine years is as good a tribute as could be paid to the work. Occasion has been taken in issuing this new edition to add a chapter on Rodin and the Institute, in which the progress of what ten years ago was altogether a new movement in sculpture is further considered. Except in sculpture, and in the sculpture of Rodin and that more or less directly influenced by him, there has been no new phase of French art developed within the decade, and Mr. Brownell has done well to supplement his former discussions with an account of this movement.

Too much can scarcely be said in compliment to the publishers for the elegant dress in which they have reissued the work. The little



EVENING

By Robert C. Minor

Collection of Frederick S. Gibbs, New York



12mo volume of former years, issued without illustrations, appears now as a superb royal octavo with clear-cut type, heavy deckle-edge paper, and upward of fifty full-page half-tone reproductions of representative works of French art. The volume is the equal in point of taste and mechanical excellence of the magnificent art tones issued in Europe, and the best feature of the work is that the subject-matter is worthy of the form in which it is presented.

The latest edition to the Riverside Art Series, issued by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., and prepared by Estelle M. Hurl, is devoted to Landseer, the famous English lover of dogs and horses. The volume contains a portrait of the painter and half-tone reproductions of fifteen of his paintings. Since the death of Landseer, in 1874, two careful biographies of him have been published, those by F. G. Stevens and Cosmo Monkhouse, besides innumerable magazine articles. Miss Hurl has made good use of the material furnished her, and has given a succinct outline of Landseer's career, a list of his contemporaries, and brief appreciations of the pictures she has reproduced. These include such popular works as "Suspense," "Dignity and Impudence," "Jack in Office," and others equally well known, together with a photograph of the less familiar lion of the Nelson column in Trafalgar Square, London. The volume is equal to any of its predecessors, which is saying much for its value.

It is the fashion nowadays—and a very commendable one at that—for publishers to make art books out of literary classics. That is what Harper & Brothers have done in issuing a new edition of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," with illustrations by Peter Newell. Lewis Carroll's famous work, as E. S. Martin says in the introduction, passed long ago out of the range of criticism and doubt, and has taken its place in the world of literature as a good book. It is the weird, uncanny product of a unique character who dreamed day-dreams for the delight of children, and it needs the illustrations of a man who dreams just as weirdly and uncannily in art. These Mr. Newell has supplied, forty of them as much in wonderland as Alice herself.

The publishers could not have found an artist more in sympathy with his author. Carroll's genius was unique, and so is Newell's. The author took Alice on her adventures into the realm of fancy, and the artist has followed her in much the spirit that an intelligent child would, and has sought to put in pictorial form the impressions he received.

He presents to us the Rabbit, the Mouse, the Dodo, the Cheshire Cat, the Gryphon, the Mock-turtle, the March Hare, the Hatter, and the other members of a remarkable family, reflected in the mirror of his uncanny and surprising mind. It is a new set of portraits of old

acquaintances, and on viewing the forty full-page plates one doubts if Carroll ever had so sympathetic an illustrator or pictorial interpreter. The pictures are remarkable achievements of imagination vividly portrayed. The fanciful borders executed by Robert Murray Wright and printed in delicate tint around the text are no less unique and pleasing.

In writing a monograph on the great Florentine architect Brunelleschi for the admirable great masters in Painting and Sculpture Series, published by the Macmillan Company, Leader Scott undertook an especially difficult task, but he has executed it in as satisfactory a manner as could be expected from the material with which he had to work. In writing the life of a painter his works are before an author just as he painted them; a sculptor's statues and reliefs also show visibly his own handiwork untouched by any sacrilegious hand; the music of a composer is transmitted to posterity as he conceived it. But in the case of Brunelleschi, his designs were changed even in the hands that continued them on his death, and his buildings were restored by subsequent architects and incongruous bits were inserted in them. Thus the works which should best illustrate the architect's nobility of conception are now more misleading than convincing in their evidence.

Mr. Scott, however, has made careful use of all available data. He gives a readable account of the architect's education and career, discusses his principal works, considers him as city architect, church builder, palace builder, and military engineer, and gives a well-weighted estimate of the heritage he left to the world. As in the case of previous volumes of the series, the book is profusely illustrated, and is supplied with a comprehensive bibliography, a chronology of principal dates, and a list of extant works.

"Margot," by Millicent E. Mann, published by A. C. McClurg & Co., is the charming story of a court shoemaker's child in the days of Louis XIV. The thread of the delicately told narrative will be of less interest to the readers of BRUSH AND PENCIL than the remarkably sympathetic and well-executed illustrations supplied by Troy and Margaret Kinney. Some of these were reproduced by special permission in a recent issue of this magazine, and are as fine examples of the illustrator's work as one may see in recent publications. The artists have entered thoroughly into the spirit of the text, and have virtually transported themselves into the times of the story, with the result that a most delightful bit of writing is enforced and vivified with a series of pictures which in grace, charm, and faithfulness to the time and people portrayed are altogether exceptional.

For further Book Reviews, see advertising page 11.